

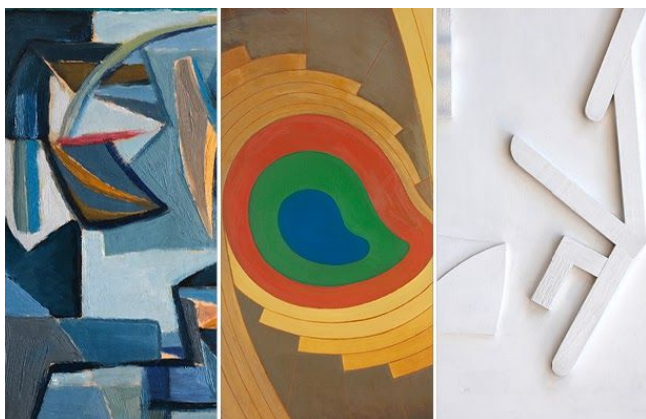
Sullivan Goss

AN AMERICAN GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 30, 2020



DREWES FISCHINGER GORDIN

THE INVENTION OF AMERICAN ABSTRACT ART

OCTOBER 30 - DECEMBER 28, 2020

THIS EXHIBITION WILL BE OPEN FOR SOCIALLY DISTANT VIEWING. GALLERY VISITS ARE LIMITED TO EIGHT MASK-WEARING GUESTS AT A TIME. YOU CAN ALSO SEE THE ENTIRE EXHIBITION ONLINE.

SANTA BARBARA - Sullivan Goss is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition from the **Estates of WERNER DREWES (1899-1985)** and **OSKAR FISCHINGER (1900-1967)** in context with work from the **Estate of SIDNEY GORDIN (1918-1996)**. All three artists are well-listed modernists whose works generally descend from the ideas being taught at the BAUHAUS school in Germany; that is, they are abstract, geometric, or even “non-objective” and concern themselves with the mechanics of perception and incorporating the rising prominence of science and technology into their processes and their content. Today, the works of these three artists are found in many important museum and private collections in America and in Europe.

In late 2007, Sullivan Goss took on representation of the Estate of Sidney Gordin – an incredibly advanced modern artist who first gained fame at a major American sculpture exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1951. The Gallery was fortunate. A bleeding-edge contemporary dealer in San Francisco named Paule Anglim had recommended the gallery as a reputable establishment with a good program fit for Gordin’s work. In the last thirteen years, the gallery mounted four solo exhibitions ([2008](#), [2009](#), [2012](#), and [2016](#)) and included his work in numerous other exhibitions, including a number of important contextual exhibitions like [GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: Recurring Patterns in American Art, 2010](#); [CA COOL: what’s so cool about california?, 2015](#); and [CALIFORNIA BAUHAUS, 2019](#). Throughout that period, additional research and publications have solidified the artist’s reputation and his auction and gallery market has seen a concomitant rise.

This year, the Gallery looks forward to embarking on a similar project with the Estates of Werner Drewes and Oskar Fischinger. Already, the Gallery has presented works by Oskar Fischinger and Werner Drewes

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in the 2019 CALIFORNIA BAUHAUS exhibition.

The aesthetic overlaps between the three artists are obvious, but they are also connected in other ways. Sidney Gordin was a student of Werner Drewes through a special program offered by the Brooklyn Museum and funded by the W.P.A. Drewes was one of the major teachers of Bauhaus ideas in the U.S. He was born in East Germany and took classes at the Bauhaus from famous teachers like Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and László Moholy-Nagy, both when the school was located in Weimar and later in Dessau. Fischinger was also born in Germany and became friends with László Moholy-Nagy in Berlin. Through his friendship, he was introduced to the German artist Rudolph Bauer who exposed a young Fischinger to the works of Kandinsky.

WERNER DREWES is well represented by important galleries in New York, Denver, and now Santa Barbara. Born in Germany, Drewes enrolled in classes at the famous **Bauhaus Art School** after seeing avant-garde **German Expressionist** art at a gallery in Berlin. At the Bauhaus, he took classes from Johannes Itten and Paul Klee. He brought Bauhaus ideas to the U.S. in 1930. He taught at Columbia University, Brooklyn College, the Institute of Design in Chicago (a.k.a. New Bauhaus) and at Washington University in St. Louis, where he taught for almost twenty years. In 1936, Drewes helped found the **American Abstract Artists** group. In 1984, Ingrid Rose published the catalogue raisonné of his printed work. Drewes' work is held in many museums, but among the most important are the National Gallery in Washington D.C., the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

OSKAR FISCHINGER was a master of early non-objective painting, an inventor of the music video, a pioneer in multimedia immersive environments, and a prophet of both Op Art and contemporary computer-generated motion graphics. He was born in Gelnhausen outside of Frankfurt, Germany. At age fourteen, he was an apprentice to an organ maker for a year before working as a draftsman in an architect's office at age sixteen. His familiarity with mechanical tools and drafting were to prove important to his later work. After being exposed to early efforts to synthesize visual art with film, he went on to produce a large body of award-winning abstract films set to music. In 1936, Paramount hired him on this basis and he relocated to Los Angeles, where he joined an avant-garde community that included architects Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, the musician Arnold Schoenberg, and artists like Lorser Feitelson, Peter Krasnow, and Knud Merrild. He also maintained a critical relationship with the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Non-Objective Art**, today's Guggenheim. Although he released *An Optical Poem* through MGM Studios in 1938, much of his life in the U.S. was devoted to abstract painting. He has since been recognized for his important work in abstract film with two monographs – *OPTICAL POETRY: The Life and Work of Oskar Fischinger* by Dr. William Mortiz and *OSKAR FISCHINGER 1900-1967: Experiments in Cinematic Abstraction* by Cindy Keefer and Jaap Guldemondand. He has also had a number of important exhibitions of this work at places like the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Tate Modern. Fischinger's work is held in many museums, but among the most important are the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim in New York, the Tate Modern in London, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C.

SIDNEY GORDIN was born in today's Ukraine, but was raised in Brooklyn. He was fortunate to attend the Brooklyn Technical High School—an early “magnet school”—where he learned mechanical drafting and welding. Both proved indispensable to his career as an artist. From there, his portfolio earned him full entry to Cooper Union in lower Manhattan, where he studied under Leo Katz (1887-1982). He graduated in 1941 with a degree focused on painting. He and the other members of the “**the Club**” of **New York School Abstract Expressionists** were anxious to develop something new, something Great, and above all, something American. Despite Gordin’s innovative experiments with Abstract Expressionist painting in the 40s, it was sculpture that helped him break out. In 1951, Gordin’s work was featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s American Sculpture exhibition. Subsequent exhibitions at the MOMA, the Guggenheim, and the Whitney helped him get hired to teach at U.C. Berkeley in 1958. He later joined the **American Abstract Artists** group. His documentation is vast, but it isn't focused into a single monograph. The gallery hopes to correct that. Gordin’s work is held in many museums, but among the most important are the National Gallery in Washington D.C., the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.